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Message Text

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11
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 INR-07

LAB-04 NSAE-00 SIL-01 /042 W
---------- 112126
R 200600Z DEC 75
FM AMEMBASSY HELSINKI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9487
INFO AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK
AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM
USMISSION GENEVA
USEC BRUSSELS 683

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ELAB, PINT, FI
SUBJECT: METALWORKERS' CONGRESS: THE FIGHT GOES ON

REF: HELSINKI 2677, 2704

1. SUMMARY:METALWORKERS' CONGRESS CAME TO TORTUOUS END DECEMBER 17 MUCH AS EXPECTED - WITH SOCIAL DEMOCRATS AND COMMUNISTS FAILING TO AGREE ON KEY ISSUES. TWO CONTENDING FACTIONS DID GET TOGETHER TO RE-ELECT TOP LEADERS AND TO EXPAND UNION EXECUTIVE AND COUNCIL, BUT COULD NOT PRODUCE UNITED LINE FOR CURRENT NATIONAL COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AND INCOME POLICY NEGOTITATIONS. DESPITE VEHMENT COMMUNIST OBJECTIONS, SOCDEMS MAINTAINED THEIR REFUSAL TO RENEW AGREEMENT ON PROPORTIONAL APPOINTMENT OF UNION OFFICIALS. RESULTS REFLECT CONTENTIOUS SITUATION IN FINLAND'S NEW CENTER/LEFT GOVERNMENT AND INCREASE LIKELIHOOD THAT COMMUNISTS MAY WALK OUT OF CABINET SOONER RATHER THAN
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LATER. END SUMMARY.

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2. INCOMES POLICY NEGOTIATIONS. SHARPLY-DIVIDED FINNISH METALWORKERS FAILED TO AGREE ON UNIONS'S STRATEGY ON NEGOTIATIONS TO RENEW NATIONWIDE COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AND INCOMES POLICY AGREEMTNS WHICH EXPIRE JANUARY 31. SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC MAJORITY, SUPPORTED BY THE HANDFUL OF CENTER PARTY DELEGATES, CALLED FOR METALWORKERS TO WORK, "ON THE FIRST INSTANCE," FOR A ONE-YEAR CENTRALIZED AGREEMENT (NEGOTIATED AT FEDERATION-LEVEL FOR ALL UNIONS). RESOLUTION STATES, HOWEVER, THAT METALWORKERS READY TO NEGOTIATE ON UNION-LEVEL IF NECESSARY. RESOLUTION STRESSES NEED TO ASSURE RISE IN REAL INCOME AND TO GUARANTEE EMPLOYMENT IN ADDITION TO NUMEROUS IMPROVEMENTS IN SOCIAL BENEFITS. INDEXATION IS CALLED FOR IN OTHER MEASURES (I.E. PRICE CONTROLS) TO PROVIDE ADEQUATE GUARANTEES AGAINST INFLATION. SOCDEM-APPROVED RESOLUTION CALLS FOR STEP-BY-STEP INTRODUCTION OF TWO-WEEK PAID WINTER HODIDAY IN ADDITION TO CURRENT FOUR-WEEK SUMMER HOLIDAY. COMMUNISTS REGARD INDEXATION AS A MUST IN ANY SETTLEMENT AND IMMEDIATE IMPLEMENTATION OF WINTER HOLIDAY AS WELL AS MINIMUM ACROSS-THE-BOARD WAGE INCREASE OF 2 FINNMARKS (53 CENTS) AN HOUR. STALINIST MINORITY FACTION OF COMMUNIST PARTY TRIED AS USUAL TO OUTBID OTHERS BY DEMANDING EVEN MORE - 2.50 FM PER HOUR INCREASE.

3. THE POLITICAL RIVALRY. ISSUES WERE DECIDED UNANIMOUSLY AT METALWORKERS' LAST CONGRESS IN 1971. FREQUENT RESORT TO VOTE IN 1975 REFLECTS SOCDEMS MAINTENANCE OF THEIR REFUSAL, OVER BITTER AND VOLUMINOUS COMMUNIST PROTEST, TO RENEW AGREEMTN WHEREBY UNION OFFICIALS APPOINTED ON BASIS OF PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION. SOCDEMS DECLARED INTENTION TO DISMISS OFFICIALS WHO CHALLENGE MAJORITY DECISIONS ADDED FULE TO FIRE.

THE TWO PARTIES DID, HOWEVER, GET TOGETHER ON ELECTION OF UNION GOVERNING BODIES. ALL FOUR CURRENT LEADERS: CHAIRMAN SULO PENTTILA (SDP), SECOND CHAIRMAN ILMARI KOSONEN (COMMUNIST), FIRST SECRETARY EINO YRJONEN (SDP), AND SECOND SECRETARY HARRY VAINIO (COMMUNIST) WERE RE-ELECTED. THE UNION EXECUTIVE WAS EXPANDED FROM 16 LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

TO 18 AND THE UNION COUNCIL FROM 43 TO 55 MEMBERS, AS AGREED IN ADVANCE. LARGE PROPORTIONS OF THE REPRESENTATIVES CHOSEN BY THEIR RESPECTIVE GROUPS FOR THESE TW BODIES ARE NEW.

4. FOREIGN POLICY. THE MAJOR ISSUE WAS FINLAND'S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE EEC. THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC RESOLUTION CALLS FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO MAKE A THOROUGH REPORT ON HOW THE

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IMPLEMENTATION OF THE TRADE AGREEMENT HAS AFFECTED THE NATION. THE COMMUNISTS WANT FINLAND TO ABROGATE THE AGREEMENT WITHOUT FURTHER DELAY.

5. POLITICAL RAMIFICATIONS. DESPITE SDP CHAIRMAN SORSA'S PLEA AT OPENING SESSION TO BEAR IN MIND COMMON AIMS OF WORKING CLASS AND IN PARTICULAR CURRENT EFFORTS OF SOCDEM/ COMMUNIST COOPERATION IN GOVERNMENT, NEITHER SIDE SEEMED TO PAY MUCH HEED, AND FINAL RESULT GIVES VOICE TO MANY OF FUNDAMENTAL DIFFERENCES. COMMUNIST LINE ON INCOME POLICY NEGOTIATIONS DOES NOT AUGER WELL FOR STABILITY OF GOVERNMENT THAT MUST PLAY A LARGE ROLE IN SUCH NEGO- TIATIONS. THEIR ATTEMPT TO CHANGE THE UNION ROLE REQUIRING A 2/3 VOTE FOR STRIKE - WHICH THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS NOTED WAS ADOPTED UNANIMOUSLY IN 1971 - IS ANOTHER SUCH INDICATIONS. HOUSTON

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